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An Inaugural Essay

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Pneumonia Biliosa

For the degree of Doctor of Medicine

by

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of

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Pneumonia is a genus of disease, arranged by Cullen, under the class of Pyrexia, and order Phlegmasia.

In particular instances, it has obtained the name of Bilious, from the evident derangement of the liver which exists. In such cases, we have added to the ordinary symptoms of Pneumonia, pain in the head nausea and vomiting of bilious matter. It is in fact a simple Pneumonia, grafted upon a bilious constitution. Pneumonia Biliosa is to be met with in climates, remarkable, for frequent and sudden vicissitudes of weather, and in districts of country, favorable to the generation of miasmata, and consequently to the production of Intermittent, and other fevers; which lay the foundation in the system, upon which Pneumonia Biliosa is erected.

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It has been a disease of common occurence in the county, in which we have resided, for the last three or four years; during which time, - Intermittent, and remittent fevers, have been very prevalent.

The seasons for its appearance are Spring and Autumn. It selects for its subjects, such as have at some former period, labored under our ordinary autumnal fevers, and in whose systems, the ravages of their destructive influence, can still be traced. The sallow complexion, anasarcous extremities, enlarged Liver and Spleen, are all evidences, of what has transpired in the system.

Next to persons of this description, it attacks such, as are weak and debilitated from disease, or other causes; and particularly, those liable to pulmonary complaints.

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Women and children, are less liable to this complaint than men: and it has been remarked, that our black population, "are scarcely ever afflicted with this form of Pneumonia". Our limited experience, (which we would not presume to stake against ample opportunities, in profession of reputed medical skill), does not accord with this statement. On the contrary the greater number of cases, we have had an opportunity of seeing, have occurred among negroes, and have presented the best marked cases of Pneumonia Biliosa, we recollect to have witnessed. The circumstance, of women and children, being in a great measure exempt, from this disease, is explicable by the fact, of their not being exposed, to the remote and exciting causes. Their temperance in living, and their forbearance in the

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use of Intoxicating liquors, (which have much to do in the production of disease when freely indulged in), afford them great protection, from disease generally. In the voluptuous and dissipated, a predisposition is constantly existing, and an exciting cause, is all that is wanting, for the production of some dangerous malady, rendered doubly so, by their degenerate habits, and broken constitutions.

We have now mentioned the principal causes, which create in the system, a predisposition, to the formation of Bilious Pleurisy.

Cold is the chief cause in the immediate production of the disease, and is consequently, what is called the exciting cause. It may be applied in various ways, as by becoming wet

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from exposure to rain, by sleeping in damp rooms, or in damp sheets; by being exposed to a current of air, when the body is heated, especially if the air be moist; and by getting the feet wet, which is in truth, a very common source of catarrhal and pulmonary complaints.

Cold in its effects upon the system is very interesting. When intense cold is applied to the system, it loses its caloric, faster than it is generated, and when lost, to a certain extent the circulation ceases. But its great and operative cause, in the production of disease, is owing to the sudden suppression of perspiration, by its condensing property. The surface of the body losing caloric, becomes more compact and solid, the capillary vessels are constrict-

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ed, and the blood, circulating in them, is thrown upon internal parts, when the weaker points suffer from congestion, inflammation &c.

The symptoms of Pneumonia Biliosa are as follows. After experiencing for some time, a slight indisposition, the patient feels a sensation of cold, commencing along the back, and extending towards the extremities. This sometimes amounts to a chill, and is succeeded by fever, which usually assumes, the remittent type. Pain sometimes precedes and accompanies the chill. If you examine the patient you will find, that the pain is seated in the side, and breast, reaching as low as the region of the Liver, and extending as high as the Clavicle.

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There is dyspnoea, with a sense of weight, and oppression, across the breast. The patient has cough, which increases very much his sufferings, from the exertions, he is compelled to make. He has also considerable hoarseness, which renders articulation difficult. The expectoration is sometimes free, and at other times, it is entirely deficient. The matter coughed up is sometimes streaked with blood, and occasionally, it has the appearance of being mixed with bile. The biliary secretion, is sometimes entirely suspended, but is usually increased, as is evinced by nausea, bitter taste in the mouth, vomiting of bilious matter, &c. With these are other symptoms of Gastric, and Hepatic disorder; as pain in the forehead, furred

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tongue, constipated or relaxed bowels &c. The abdomen and side, are tender upon pressure. The pulse is full, frequent, and not uncommonly soft; a pulse differing very much, from the hard inflammatory pulse met with, in Pleuritis. The eyes are sometimes tinged with bile, and the forehead and temples, are of a dusky yellow colour. Depression of strength, sometimes takes place very early, so that when first called to a patient, you find him very much prostrated, with a pulse soft, undulating and easily compressible. The pain in such cases, will be described to you by the patient, as rather to resemble, a sensation of weight, and oppression, than actual pain. There is suffusion of the face, which, is in proportion to

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the severity of the disease. When from any cause, aid is not speedily obtained, these symptoms rapidly increase. Pain becomes more intense, dyspnea more and more distressing, until the Inflammation finally terminates, in, suppuration or effusion, known by the subsidence of pain, and the coming on of a chill, succeeded by partial flushes of heat over the body, with an alarming state of debility. The system worn out by excessive irritation, gradually sinks, and death releaves the patient from his sufferings. In this manner cases sometimes terminate, as early as, the third or fourth day. The disease progresses, notwithstanding all our efforts, convincing us of the inefficiency of our means, in always saving life.

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The pulmonary organs, and their appendages are primarily, the seat of this disease, and were it confined to these organs, would come under the head of simple Pneumonic inflammation. But we find the Liver participating, largely in this diseased state of the Lungs, which circumstance gives in a great measure type, and peculiarity to the disease in question. With Inflammation, there is also more or less congestion of these organs, and of the neighbouring parts. The same cause which produces the inflammatory process, has likewise a tendancy, to create congestion. For inflammation existing in an organ, besides inviting a much larger quantity of blood to the parts, has a tendancy to retain it there; and it is to these facts, that we would attribute, the pe-

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culiarity of the pulse, suffusion of the face difficult respiration &c. It is our belief, that an exciting cause being made to act, upon the predisposition existing in the system, would at one season produce a bilious fever, and at another, Bilious Pleurisy. A circumstance, exemplary of the fact, that cold produces diseases of the pulmonary organs, whilst heat on the contrary, deranges the digestive and assimilating apparatus.

The Pathology of the disease being understood, its treatment is evident. We have inflammation, in organs highly essential to the purposes of life, which if not speedily checked, must ultimately end in their disorganization, and destruction. The indication, then, is to cut short

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the progress of inflammation: but at the same time, we should carefully guard against debility, which we know from experience, is apt to ensue. For the purpose of arresting inflammation, we are aware, that evacuants are the best means, and that bloodletting is at once, the most powerful and efficient of this class. As to the quantity that should be abstracted, we should be entirely governed, by the circumstances of the case. For the pulse, by which we should always be governed, in our treatment of disease, will not bear depletion, generally to any great extent, as too fatal experience sometimes, teaches us. It is here we think, out of the few instances which occur, that small bleedings, frequently repeated, answer best. We have for instance, taken six or eight ounces

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of blood, from a patient, every morning for some days, with manifest advantage. During the day we gave him calomel, and assisted its operation by some gentle laxative, at the same time, supporting the system with cordials, we exhibited the Dover's powders at night. The bleedings then should be small, and frequently repeated. By pursuing this plan, we gain a striking advantage, which is that we enable, the system to reconcile, and adapt itself to the loss, and in this way guard against that debility, which would almost invariably, be the consequence of the removal of a large quantity of blood. Again, by these small evacuations of blood, we prevent the inflammatory action from becoming so violent, as to destroy the parts which it occupies, until, assisted by other means, we restore the secretions of the skin, and

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mucous membrane of the Lungs; when the patient begins immediately to recover. We however, still keep in mind, that there is nothing, to equal large bleeding in the reduction, of inflammation, when the nature of the case admits, and requires it. We shall soon find that by the loss, even of small quantities of blood, that oppression and weight across the breast, are relieved, breathing freer, and pain mitigated.

We should now direct our attention to the digestive and assimilating organs, & first to the stomach, the great centre of sympathetic action, and the primum mobile, in the extension of remedial impressions. We are aware, that medicines make their first impression on the stomach, and that this impression is conveyed to whatever part, or parts, upon-

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which, it is known to exert its influence. We have then, only to glance at the condition of the Stomach, and Liver, and experience points out the plan to be pursued. It is evident that something offensive, and insupportable, exists in the Stomach, as is evinced by nausea, vomiting, aversion to food &c. It is then our duty, to assist the curative operation of nature, by the administration of an emetic. In such cases we prefer the Ipecacuanha. Emetics in their operation, unload the Stomach and Liver, equalize excitement, determine to the surface, and promote expectoration. A few grains of calomel, administered either alone, or in combination with camphor, so soon as the stomach is sufficiently composed, and repeated about once in three or four hours, will be found extremely useful.

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The calomel changes the secretion of the liver, and assisted by some aperient, (we generally prefered Epsom Salts) carries off the vitiated contents of the bowels, whilst the camphor, recruits the powers of the system, after the operation of the emetic, and sustains a gentle breathing perspiration, over the surface of the body. This treatment, combined with the administration of antimonials, and Dover's powder, assisted by the application of a large blister, upon the breast, will in most instances, put a happy end, to the disease. Concerning the time, at which blisters should be applied, there is some difference of opinion. It is the opinion of some that the system, may be brought to what might be termed the blistering point, by the use of the lancet, at any stage of a disease, and this is our belief. The blis-

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-ter then should be applied early, and im-
-mediately over the seat of the pain. This
then is the ordinary course of treatment,
in Pneumonia Biliosa. But it is not
our happy lot, always thus to triumph.
Upon unavoidable circumstances, the
disease sometimes assumes, a more obsti-
-nate, and violent appearance. The pain
if checked returns, and with it, there exists
an alarming state of mental and corpore-
-al debility. Respiration becomes hurried
and more difficult, and there is an ag-
-gravation, of the symptoms generally.
We have here local inflammation &
constitutional debility, to stimulate the
system, would increase the inflam-
-matory symptoms, and to deplete would
be death. Here a nice discrimination
is requisite. The usual plan is to direct
our attention, to the constitutional affection,

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regardless of the local disease. But a mixed treatment, is much more judicious. The system should therefore if possible, be kept under an artificial state of excitement, whilst at the same time we cautiously, use depletion. The best remedies then, for the fulfilment of the several indications, consist in a combination, of calomel, opium, and camphor. It has been supposed that opium, as a stimulant increases less than others, the inflamation in such cases. The opium and camphor, then keep the circulation, to a proper standard, during which time, the calomel promoted by the use of laxative glysters, depletes by its action, upon the secretion of the Liver and intestines. Local bloodletting, and warm fomentations, should not be neglected.

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The calomel also removes the vitiated-contents of the bowels. And we shall find that the system will react, instead of being weakened, by those evacuations. It is a fact, well known, that the secretions of the Liver, and Intestines, when suffered to remain any length of time, become vitiated, and produce depression of strength; and that the removal of this matter, is of great importance in the cure of certain diseases. In extreme cases of debility, we must turn our attention entirely to the Constitutional symptoms. Stimulants must be resorted to, to sustain the sinking condition of the system, and those of the most powerful kind. Give camphor in large doses, in form of julap; wine, carbonate of ammonia; and apply blis-

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tero to the neck, and extremities. And in fine nothing should be left undone, that possesses any efficacy, in arousing the system. But, sometimes when all hopes are abandoned, effusion takes place, a vomica form, and the patient recovers. When vomica form, and burst, we must support the strength of the patient, by tonics, and a generous diet. If we could anticipate the result, and feel assured that the termination, would be an effusion into the Cavity of the thorax, the previous introduction of Mercury into the system, would be highly advantageous. When effusion has taken place the patient recovers from the immediate danger, The treatment usually adopted in Hydrothorax should be commenced as soon as possible.